

# BUILDING PERMITS SURVEY DOCUMENTATION - PLACE LEVEL PRINTOUTS

## Place Level Building Permit Statistics

### Introduction

Beginning with Annual 1995 and January 1996 this file provides building permit statistics on new privately-owned residential construction. For the years 1980-1994 and the months from January 1988 through December 1995, this file provides building permit statistics on new residential and nonresidential construction; additions, alterations and conversions; and demolitions. These are provided for individual permit-issuing jurisdictions.

### Tabulation Formats

- A. The monthly State/County Listing sorted by state, county and permit-issuing jurisdiction provides:
1. Survey month.
  2. County and State names with FIPS codes.
  3. Name of permit-issuing jurisdiction and its Census ID number. Any additional information about the permit office is shown as a footnote at the end of the county.
  4. Three sets of data are shown for each place:
    - a. Current Month - Data received from monthly reporting permit-issuing jurisdiction for the current survey month. Data with an asterisk indicate that the jurisdiction did not report that field for the survey month and the data were imputed.
    - b. Year-to-Date with Imputation - Summed data from beginning of calendar year to current survey month including late reports and corrections to prior months data and imputed data for the survey months for which a report was not received.
    - c. Year-to-Date Reported - Sum of reported data only from beginning of calendar year to current survey month including late reports and corrections to prior months data (no imputed data).

5. Each of the above sets of data has 3 data items:
  - a. Bldgs - number of buildings,
  - b. Units - housing units authorized in residential buildings (and rooms in nonhousekeeping buildings for years with nonresidential items), and
  - c. Cost - valuation of construction as shown on the building permit.
6. Months reported column - number of months in current calendar year for which the jurisdiction has reported.
7. Four sets of data are shown for county totals:
  - a. Current month data with imputation.
  - b. Year-to-Date data with imputation.
  - c. Current month data for only those jurisdictions that reported.
  - d. Year-to-Date data for only those jurisdictions that reported data during the year.
8. State totals provide same data format as for the county. These are not weighted state estimates, they are just the sum of the data shown on the printout.

B. The annual State/County Listing sorted by state, county and permit-issuing jurisdiction provides:

1. Survey year
2. County and State names with FIPS codes.
3. Name of permit-issuing jurisdiction and its Census ID number. Any additional information about the permit office is shown as a footnote at the end of the county. Historic listings have some footnotes appended to their place name as follows:

(N) - Permit-issuing places identified since the 19,000-place universe was established in 1994 (selection actually took place in July 1993); activity for these places is not included in summary statistics

# - See explanatory footnote.

@1 - The State of Montana, Department of Commerce, Building Codes Bureau issues the building permits for residential buildings with 5 units or more and all nonresidential buildings. Permits are not required for residential buildings with 1 to 4 units.

@2 - Permits are issued by both the State of Montana, Department of Commerce, Building Codes Bureau and the local jurisdiction. These data are based on permits issued by the local jurisdiction and include residential building with 1 to 4 units.

@3 - Permit system called "County Part" covers residential construction of four or more family buildings and commercial construction for the entire county. Permits for places listed separately only cover the construction of one, two and three family buildings.

@4 - Permit system covers the construction of one, two and three family buildings.

@5 - Permit system only covers the construction of one and two family buildings.

4. Two sets of data are shown for each place:

- a. Estimates with Imputation - include reported data for both monthly and annual respondents and imputed data for nonrespondents.
- b. Reported Only - includes only reported data for both monthly and annual respondents.

5. Each of the above sets of data has 3 data items:

- a. Bldgs - number of buildings,
- b. Units - housing units authorized in residential buildings (and rooms in nonhousekeeping buildings for years with nonresidential items), and
- c. Cost - valuation of construction as shown on the building permit.

6. Months reported column - number of months in current calendar year for which the jurisdiction has reported.

7. County and State totals provide same data format as for permit-issuing jurisdictions.

C. Data Totals

- 1. Monthly State/County Totals are the sum of monthly reporters for individual states or counties. These totals are not necessarily total estimates for the state or county.
- 2. Annual State/County Totals are the sum of both monthly and annual reporters for individual states or counties.

## Source of Data

Statistics provided in these tabulations are based upon reports submitted by local building permit officials in response to a mail survey. If an official fails to respond and the permit-issuing place is in our Residential Permit Use Survey (SUP), then the residential housing unit data are obtained from that survey (nonresidential, nonhousekeeping and demolition data were imputed.) The SUP (a component of the Survey of Construction) is a survey in which interviewers go to approximately 850 selected permit offices and list data from each building permit that authorizes construction of new residential housekeeping buildings. If no report is received and the place is not in SUP, then all data items are imputed.

## Geographic Coverage of Building Permit Jurisdiction

Most of the permit-issuing jurisdictions are municipalities; the remainder are counties, townships, or unincorporated towns. For the municipalities, and townships or towns, the area subject to building permit requirements to which the figures pertain is normally that of the governmental jurisdictions. A small number of municipalities have authority to issue building or zoning permits for areas extending beyond their corporate limits. In such cases, the data relate to the entire area within which the permit-issuing authority is exercised. Similarly, a small number of townships issue permits for only a part of the township and the data normally covers only the area subject to the township's permit system.

## Limitations of Data

The portion of construction measurable from building permit records is inherently limited since such records obviously do not reflect construction activity outside of the area subject to local permit requirements. For the nation as a whole, less than 5 percent of all privately owned housing units built are construction in areas that do not require building permits.

The reported statistics are also influenced by the following factors:

1. Some building permit jurisdictions close their books a few days before the end of the month/year, so that the time reference for permits is not, in all cases, strictly the calendar month/year.
2. A study spanning 4 years showed that about 3 percent of the single-family houses built in permit-issuing places are built without a permit.

To the extent that most of these limiting factors apply rather consistently over an extended period, they may not seriously impair the usefulness of building permit statistics as prompt indicators of trends in residential construction activity.

Questions should be directed to Manufacturing and Construction Division, US Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 20233-6900. Phone: (301) 457-1321.